

# SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

## *In The Grip of God's Grace*

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

### **Romans 4:17-25 - "The Faith of Abraham"**

Romans 4:17-25, *"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."*

One of my favorite books around our house is the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Now and then I like reading it to stock up on trivia. How much did the heaviest man weigh? (1,069 pounds.) How tall was the tallest man of modern times? (8' 11", He wore a size 37AA shoe.) What is the world's record for bearing children? (Sixty-nine. The record was set by a Russian peasant woman who achieved great honor in her country. She had eight sets of twins, seven sets of triplets, and four sets of quads.) There is an error in the esteemed Guinness Book because it states that the oldest mother on record gave birth in October 1956 at the age of fifty-seven, thus setting the world record. However, this is entirely wrong!

The last part of Romans 4 focuses on the true story of the oldest mother and the wonderful world-changing implications of that birth.

Paul is using the Old Testament story as a masterful argument for justification by faith.

Using father Abraham, Paul shows us that he was justified by faith alone (Romans 3:28)

In our last study (Chp 4:1-16) we saw how God saved Abraham:

1. By faith not works (vs. 1-8)
2. By faith not rites (vs. 9-12)
3. By faith not law (vs. 13-16)

Today we look at “by faith in God’s promise” (vs. 17-25)

We see the nature of true faith.

If we are saved by faith, what is faith?

Many people are confused when it comes to understanding faith:

- Some think faith is nothing but a mental assent to a fact that if you believe a thing is true, then you are exercising faith.
- Others believe that faith is a feeling – a feeling of confidence.
- Still others think that faith is actually a type of self-deception that is believing what you know is not true.
- But none of these are Biblical views of true faith.

Biblical faith is “trust” in a trustworthy God – trusting His Word and committing to it.

It’s not blind – it see’s clearly!

David Reed - “Faith is not a leap in the dark; it is a leap out of darkness into the light.”

Faith is not believing in spite of obedience, it’s obeying in spite of consequence.

As we consider together the example of Abraham’s faith lets note four facts of his faith.

#### I. The Object of Abraham’s faith (vs. 17)

Romans 4:17, *“(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”*

The most important thing about true faith is its object.

What is to be the object of our faith or trust?

God and His promises (found in the Word of God)

In verse 17, Paul takes us back to the Book of Genesis

Genesis 17:5, *“... for a father of many nations have I made thee.”*

Genesis 17:1-8, *“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt*

*be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."*

## They both laughed

*Genesis 17:17, Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? ""*

*Genesis 18:11-15, "Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh."*

Abraham's faith was in God and His promise – our focus should be God.

Getting to know God better.

How? – His Word

What kind of God did Abraham put his faith in?

### 1. The God of Resurrection Power!

*(vs.17) "...whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead,..."*

### 2. The God of Creation Power

*Sarah laughed – Genesis 18:14, "...? Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"*

*How big is your God? – See vs. 21, "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."*

## II. The Obstacles to Abraham's faith (vs. 18-20)

*Romans 4:18-20, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And*

*being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;"*

Whenever we are called to exercise faith there will be obstacles.

The New Living Translation renders verse 18 this way, *"Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping - believing that he would become the father of many nations."*

This is where some would say faith is un-reasonable, or irrational. It's a synonym for superstition.

Faith is not blind it sees all the obstacles.

What are the Obstacles?

(vs. 19) His and Sarah's bodies

FB Meyer-"You never test the resources of God until you attempt the impossible."

What are the Obstacles to your faith?

Don't deny them, and don't focus on them either, focus on God and His promises (vs. 20)

God specializes in the impossible.

There are no impossibilities when God is in the equation.

1. Abraham's faith was based on the bare words of God, and nothing else whatsoever.
2. His faith was in spite of strong circumstances to the contrary.

### III. The Objectives of Abraham's faith (vs. 20b-22)

Romans 4:20b-22, *"...but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."*

1. To be made strong through faith (vs. 20b)

Illustration: Noah, Moses, Joshua, Rahab

Hebrews:11:32-40, *"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness*

*were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”\*

If you are weak and defeated today its most likely because you're walking by sight, or feelings, or looking at peoples; or circumstances.

Living by faith makes you strong

“Faith came singing into my room,  
And other guests took flight;  
Fear and anxiety, grief and gloom  
Sped out into the night.  
I wondered that such peace could be,  
But faith said gently, “Don’t you see?  
They really cannot live with me.”

---Elizabeth Cheney

## 2. To bring glory to God (vs. 20)

Faith is the only way for us to please or glorify God!

Unbelief robs God of glory!

Anyone can sing in the sunshine.

Faith grows us, making us strong.

Faith glorifies God.

## 3. But faith also grounds us (vs. 21) “fully persuaded”.

Abraham grounded his faith in God’s faithfulness. And so should we, above all whenever we find ourselves to be weak, fearful, or anxious. A. W. Tozer wrote wisely, “The tempted, the anxious, the fearful, the discouraged may all find new hope and good cheer in the knowledge that our Heavenly Father is faithful. ... The hard-pressed son’s of the covenant may be sure that he will never remove his loving-kindness from them nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.”

God is able to perform!

4. Lastly faith (vs. 22) brings to us righteousness.

#### IV. The Application of Abraham's faith (vs. 23-25)

Romans 4:23-25, *"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."*

What do we learn from Romans 4?

1. To live by faith

Outlook try the uplook (like Job)

##### By Faith, Not Sight

Sometimes I'm sad, I know not why,  
My heart is so distressed,  
It seems the burdens of this world  
Have settled on my heart.  
And yet I know . . . I know that God  
Who doeth all things right  
Will lead me thru to understand  
To walk by *faith* . . . not *sight*.  
And though I may not see the way  
He's planned for me to go,  
The way seems dark to me just now  
But oh, I'm sure He knows!  
Today He guides my feeble step  
Tomorrow's in His right,  
He has asked me never to fear  
But walk by *faith* . . . not *sight*.  
Some day the mists will roll away.  
The sun will shine again,  
I'll see the beauty in the flowers  
I'll hear the bird's refrain.  
And then I'll know my Father's hand  
Has led the way to light,  
Because I placed my hand in His  
And walked by *faith* . . . not *sight*.

----Ruth A. Morgan

2. That God saves us the same way as He saved Abraham

By Faith – Not works  
Not rites  
Not law

By faith in God's Promises

It's a fact of history.

Key words:

- 1) faith-believe – 26 times
- 2) impute – 11 times
- 3) justified or righteous – 11